



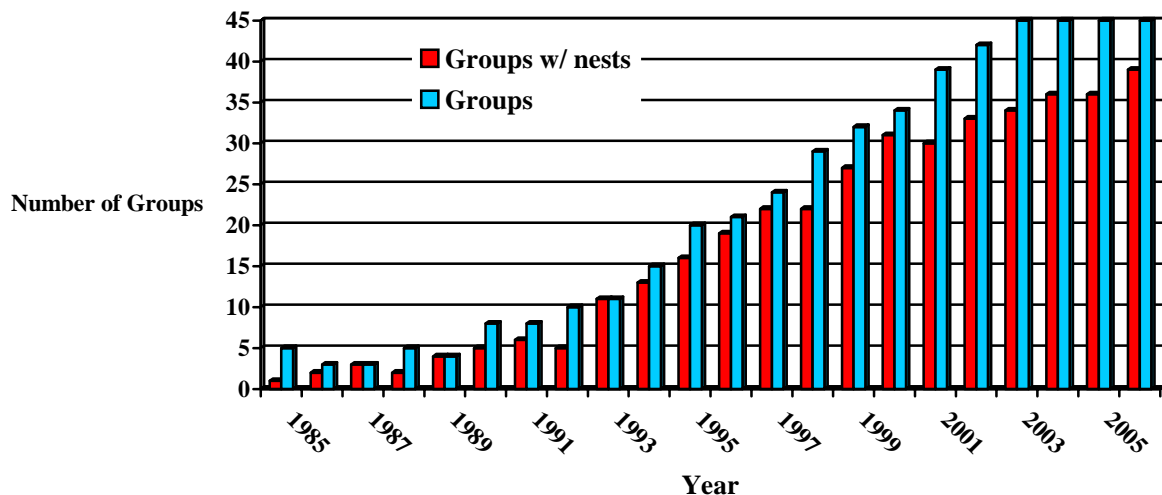
USDA Forest Service-Savannah River (USFS-SR) Fiscal Year 2006 Environmental Report

USFS-SR manages the natural resources at the United States Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS). Operating under an interagency agreement, USFS-SR follows SRS Strategic Plan goals and objectives to implement the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan. Management is designed to demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship, to provide natural resource information critical to the DOE science base and to provide cost-effective, flexible, and compatible programs to support SRS missions.

In support of SRS environmental stewardship, USFS-SR

Maintained and improved habitat to meet recovery population objectives for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species

In fiscal year 2006, USFS-SR improved habitat for the endangered red cockaded woodpecker (RCW) by removing 266 acres of midstory vegetation and conducting 2,543 acres of prescribed fire. Successful habitat manipulation increased the number of active groups from 1 in 1985 to 45 in 2003, and this number has been maintained through fiscal year 2006. USFS-SR also conducted surveys of threatened and endangered plants on 1,300 acres to avoid detrimental impacts and maintain their viability.



Number of red-cockaded woodpecker groups at SRS

Continued to restore native SRS habitats to improve ecosystem health and biodiversity

USFS-SR reforested 1,100 acres with native longleaf and loblolly pine and improved timber stands and snag habitat (dead standing trees for wildlife) on 837 acres in fiscal year 2006. As outlined in the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan, USFS-SR converted 910 acres of non-native slash pine to these native species, with a 10-year goal of removing all slash pine. As a byproduct of this habitat improvement, USFS-SR sold over 70,000 hundred cubic feet of timber.



After non-native slash pine has been removed...



...Native longleaf and loblolly have been replanted

USFS-SR completed all Site requests for watershed maintenance in fiscal year 2006. Over 1,800 acres were maintained by a variety of methods, including protecting structures and developments, restoring soil porosity and native vegetation, stabilizing stream channels and mitigating stream bank erosions, and controlling actively eroding areas.

Continued to evaluate the effects of human activities on the environment

USFS-SR teamed with a number of universities, as well as the Forest Service Southern Research Station, to develop and demonstrate solutions to on-the-ground resource management problems and to improve our knowledge and understanding of southern forest ecosystems. USFS-SR

- Continued to study methods to increase tree growth rates, e.g. various rates of fertilization and irrigation, and biomass/bioenergy production
- Improved understanding of how natural fallen woody debris diversifies habitats for flora and fauna
- Developed methods to improve and maintain habitat for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species
- Continued to develop methods to restore wetlands
- Studied the effects of habitat fragmentation and vegetation corridors on flora and fauna composition and distribution
- Monitored and evaluated the effects of prescribed fire on natural habitats and public health
- Improved understanding of prescribed fire smoke plume movement.

Continued to excel in safety and health performance

USFS-SR had an excellent safety record in fiscal year 2006. There were no lost work days due to injuries and no recordable injuries from over 173,000 work-hours and 290,000 vehicle-miles. USFS-SR completed 13 facility inspections, 6 project inspections, 25 safety orientations and inspections, and conducted monthly employee safety meetings. USFS-SR revised its remote worker policy to exceed Site standards by requiring notifications before traveling to remote sites and notifications of location changes between facility areas. USFS-SR is an active partner in the DOE Integrated Safety Management System which ensures a higher level of safety awareness and practicable application of requirements.

Other safety management accomplishments included the formation of a Safety and Occupational Health Council, allowing USFS-SR employees to proactively advise management on safety issues, and updating all job hazard analyses.

USFS-SR also collected biological data on deer that was used in determining appropriate Site harvest strategies to ensure population growth while reducing deer/vehicle collisions.

Continued Environmental Restoration

USFS-SR continued operations and maintenance at the Mixed Waste Management Facility Tritium Phytoremediation Project. Despite delays caused by project improvements, approximately 6.1 million gallons of tritiated water were evapotranspired. This follows the 2004 SRS Environmental Management Program Performance Management Plan to achieve accelerated cleanup and risk reduction.

Maintained infrastructure systems in a safe and environmentally sound state of operational readiness

USFS-SR maintains a comprehensive wildland fire suppression program to protect natural resources and site improvements from wildland fire and associated smoke, whether from SRS or from fires which threaten SRS. USFS-SR limited wildland fire to less than 10 acres by suppressing 14 wildland fires on SRS. USFS-SR also exceeded its yearly target by reducing hazardous fuel on 17,000 acres through prescribed fire and mechanical methods.

USFS-SR manages the SRS secondary road and bridge system to support a variety of activities at SRS, such as environmental restoration projects, monitoring well sites, timber sale activities, security access, and general Site access. USFS-SR maintained 928 miles of secondary road and constructed one-half mile of road for timber harvesting. USFS-SR also maintained 30 miles of multipurpose trails. Boundary management included monitoring the SRS boundary and monuments, as well as maintaining the SRS boundary fence and gate system.

Maintained community outreach programs to improve conservation education and stakeholder involvement



Outreach efforts to educate stakeholders about managing SRS natural resources reached almost 8,500 individuals in fiscal year 2006. Venues included news releases (2), community conservation education events (7), visits to local schools from

Smokey Bear (16) and Woodsy Owl (7), newsletters (11), and conferences/exhibits/tours (3). USFS-SR also participated in SRS internal and external planning and communications, including Citizens Advisory Board meetings.

Through DOE Environmental Justice community workshops, USFS-SR provided technical assistance to communities' economic development efforts, specifically, those communities seeking federal grants. Technical assistance reached over 500 South Carolina and Georgia community and non-profit organization representatives, including the SRS Heritage Foundation.

USDA Forest Service – Savannah River
P.O. Box 700, New Ellenton, S.C. 29809
(803) 725-2441 •

<http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/srfs/srfs.htm>
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